

I claim:

1. A mechanism for a marine propulsion system, comprising:

a gear member having an axis of rotation;

5 a generally cylindrical member having a first slot formed therein; and

a retaining member attached to said gear member, said retaining member having a first protuberance shaped to pass through said first slot and move into interfering relation with said generally cylindrical member in response to rotation of said gear member about said axis of rotation, whereby said gear member is  
10 retained axially relative to said generally cylindrical member when said first protuberance is not aligned with said first slot and said gear member is free to move axially away from said generally cylindrical member when said first protuberance is aligned with said first slot.

15 2. The mechanism of claim 1, further comprising:

a bearing carrier, said generally cylindrical member being attached to said bearing carrier.

3. The mechanism of claim 1, wherein:

20 said generally cylindrical member is a bearing adaptor.

4. The mechanism of claim 3, further comprising:

a roller bearing assembly attached to said bearing adaptor.

25 5. The mechanism of claim 1, further comprising:

a thrust bearing disposed between said gear member and said generally cylindrical member, said thrust bearing being generally concentric with said axis of rotation.

5 6. The mechanism of claim 1, further comprising:

a thrust ring and a seal ring disposed between said gear member and said generally cylindrical member, said thrust ring and seal ring being generally concentric with said axis of rotation.

10 7. The mechanism of claim 1, wherein:

said generally cylindrical member has a second slot formed therein.

8. The mechanism of claim 7, wherein:

15 said retaining member has a second protuberance shaped to pass through said second slot and move into interfering relation with said generally cylindrical member in response to rotation of said gear member about said axis of rotation.

9. The mechanism of claim 8, wherein:

20 said first and second protuberances are disposed at diametrically opposite positions on said retaining member.

10. The mechanism of claim 10, wherein:

said first and second slots are disposed at diametrically opposite positions on said generally cylindrical member.

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11. The mechanism of claim 10, wherein:

said gear member is a bevel gear.

12. A mechanism for a marine propulsion system, comprising:

a gear member having an axis of rotation;

a generally cylindrical member having a first slot formed therein;

5 a retaining member attached to said gear member, said retaining member having a first protuberance shaped to pass through said first slot and move into interfering relation with said generally cylindrical member in response to rotation of said gear member about said axis of rotation, whereby said gear member is retained axially relative to said generally cylindrical member when said first  
10 protuberance is not aligned with said first slot and said gear member is free to move axially away from said generally cylindrical member when said first protuberance is aligned with said first slot; and

a bearing carrier, said generally cylindrical member being attached to said bearing carrier.

15 13. The mechanism of claim 12, further comprising:

a thrust bearing disposed between said gear member and said generally cylindrical member, said thrust bearing being generally concentric with said axis of rotation.

20 14. The mechanism of claim 13, wherein:

said generally cylindrical member has a second slot formed therein.

15. The mechanism of claim 14, wherein:

25 said retaining member has a second protuberance shaped to pass through said second slot and move into interfering relation with said generally cylindrical member in response to rotation of said gear member about said axis of rotation.

16. The mechanism of claim 15, wherein:

said first and second protuberances are disposed at diametrically opposite positions on said retaining member; and

5       said first and second slots are disposed at diametrically opposite positions on said generally cylindrical member.

17. The mechanism of claim 16, wherein:

said gear member is a bevel gear.

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18. The mechanism of claim 17, further comprising:

a roller bearing assembly attached to said bearing adaptor; and

a thrust ring and a seal ring disposed between said gear member and said generally cylindrical member, said thrust ring and seal ring being generally

15       concentric with said axis of rotation.

19. A mechanism for a marine propulsion system, comprising:

a bevel gear having an axis of rotation;

a generally cylindrical bearing adaptor having a first slot and a second slot

20       formed therein; and

a retaining member attached to said bevel gear, said retaining member having a first protuberance shaped to pass through said first slot and move into interfering relation with said generally cylindrical bearing adaptor in response to rotation of said bevel gear about said axis of rotation, whereby said bevel gear is  
25       retained axially relative to said generally cylindrical bearing adaptor when said first protuberance is not aligned with said first slot and said bevel gear is free to move axially away from said generally cylindrical bearing adaptor when said first

protuberance is aligned with said first slot, said retaining member having a second protuberance shaped to pass through said second slot and move into interfering relation with said generally cylindrical bearing adaptor in response to rotation of said bevel gear about said axis of rotation.

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20. The mechanism of claim 19, further comprising:

a bearing carrier, said generally cylindrical bearing adaptor being attached to said bearing carrier;

a roller bearing assembly attached to said bearing adaptor;

10 a thrust bearing disposed between said bevel gear and said generally cylindrical bearing adaptor, said thrust bearing being generally concentric with said axis of rotation; and

a thrust ring and a seal ring disposed between said bevel gear and said generally cylindrical bearing adaptor, said thrust ring and seal ring being generally  
15 concentric with said axis of rotation, said first and second protuberances being disposed at diametrically opposite positions on said retaining member, said first and second slots being disposed at diametrically opposite positions on said generally cylindrical bearing adaptor.

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